

Peer Review of Scientific Information

Proposed Listing for Pearl Darter

Species: Pearl darter (*Percina aurora*)

About the Document:

Title: Proposed Listing for Pearl Darter

Summary: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list the pearl darter (*Percina aurora*) as threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The pearl darter is known to occur in the Pascagoula River drainage within the Pascagoula, Chickasawhay, Chunky, Leaf and Bouie rivers, and Okatoma and Black creeks in southern Mississippi. It is considered extirpated from the Pearl River drainage of Mississippi and Louisiana.

Type of Review: Influential

Timeline of the Peer Review:

Proposed Rulemaking document disseminated: September 21, 2016

Peer review initiated: September 22, 2016

Peer review to be completed by: November 21, 2016

Date Document will be finalized: September 21, 2017

About the Peer Review Process:

The Service solicited written comments from three independent scientific reviewers. Formal request for peer review were made to experts within the current range of the species and included individuals from academia, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (Museum of Natural Science), and U.S Army Corps of Engineers. These reviewers were selected by the Service for their recognized knowledge of the biology and distribution of the pearl darter, or other rare fish species. This review will occur during the public comment period for the proposed action. The comment period will close on November 21, 2016. We have provided each peer reviewer with information necessary to complete the review, and request that reviewers use the Southeast Region's guidance to ensure that reviews comply with the 1994 policy

statement for listing and critical habitat designation under the Act. Peer reviewers are expected to: review all material provided; identify, review, and provide other relevant data; and, provide written comments on relevance and soundness of data, analysis or assumptions of data, and whether we have used the best available science in making the proposed determination. Peer review comments will be public documents.

The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final listing determination for the pearl darter.

Peer Reviewers:

Dr. Jake Schaefer, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern Mississippi

Matt Wagner, State Ichthyologist/Curator of Fishes, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks

Dr. Todd Slack, Ph.D., U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Waterways Experiment Station

About Public Participation:

Public comments on the proposed listing rule were sought with a **Federal Register** announcement on September 21, 2016, and the distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties. This comment period ends on November 21, 2016. This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review."